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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005015

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2029

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: MFA REACTS BADLY TO EXCLUSION FROM PSI CORE GROUP

REF: A. STATE 188228

[1](#)B. ANKARA 3117 (NOTAL)

[1](#)C. ANKARA 3740 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Eric S. Edelman. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: MFA DDG for Disarmament and Arms Control reacted angrily to ref a points, threatening at one point to do all he could to scale back Turkish participation in PSI. We talked him out of withdrawing Turkey from the Spanish exercise in early 2005 for now, although whether Turkey will send an observer to the Japanese exercise is in question. Instead, he demanded assurance that the next time the PSI participants assemble (such as the meetings in Krakow and Lisbon) that Turkey be accepted into the Core Group, if it still exists. This reaction was disappointing but not surprising. We will follow up with the Turkish military to try to contain the fallout. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Polmilcouns and EXBS Advisor delivered ref a points to MFA DDG for Disarmament and Arms Control Haluk Ilicak on Sept

[1](#)3. Polmilcouns highlighted the need for Turkey to decide whether it would prefer to host an operational experts exercise or a regional exercise in 2006 and the USG offer to then talk to the Dutch to accommodate the Turkish desires. On Turkey's request for the criteria for membership in the core group (ref b), polmilcouns emphasized how the center of activity within PSI was now with the Operational Experts Working Group (OEWG) activities and that there were no plans to convene the core group for the foreseeable future.

[1](#)3. (C) Ilicak said that the GOT had held an interagency meeting on Sept 2 to discuss PSI. At that meeting, COL Iptes who led the Turkish delegation to the Copenhagen and Oslo meetings, asserted that following those meetings Turkey was now seen as one of the leading 18 nations participating in PSI. Ilicak said he told Iptes he was wrong. Every international activity has a steering group, and Turkey was not in PSI's. He understood ref a points to mean Turkey would not be accepted into the core group. While he was not the ultimate decision maker, he pledged to do everything he could to withdraw the Turkish aircraft from the 2005 Spanish exercise, to refuse to send an observer to Japan's exercise in October, and to generally reduce Turkey's participation in PSI to a minimal level. (He lamented that it was too late to stop the Turkish delegation from attending the Maritime Interdiction Game in Newport, Rhode Island later this month.) If he were not able to convince his superiors to agree with his recommendation, he certainly would work to delay everything related to PSI within the GOT. He explained his ire was due to the fact that he and TGS Strategy Department Chief MG Arslan had personally argued against those in the GOT who initially argued that PSI was equivalent to "official piracy." To convince the others, Arslan and Ilicak had applied considerable pressure plus a carrot -- if Turkish agencies contributed actively to the initiative, Turkey would be recognized as among the leaders of the Initiative.

[1](#)4. (C) Polmilcouns noted that it would only make sense to scale back Turkey's participation if Ilicak did not believe that PSI served Turkey's interest in preventing proliferation. Ilicak acknowledged that PSI was in Turkey's interest, but Turkey was capable of conducting its own anti-proliferation activities, such as the ongoing operation Black Sea Harmony, or multilaterally, such as through BLACKSEAFOR. Polmilcouns again drew Ilicak's attention to the point that the Core Group was not expected to meet in the foreseeable future and that PSI would henceforth be focused on the OEWG. EXBS Advisor added that the US delegation to the Oslo meeting reported that the Turks there were helpfully influential in steering the OEWG meeting.

[1](#)5. (C) After further discussion of the value of PSI and some back and forth on Russia's acceptance into the core group, Ilicak concluded the meeting by asking whether we could assure that Turkey would be accepted into the core group by the time of the next meeting of all PSI participants as occurred in the past with Singapore and Russia, assuming the core group still existed by that time. Polmilcouns said that he had delivered all the points contained in his instructions and would convey Ilicak's question to Washington. Ilicak said that he would not recommend reversing any decisions the GOT had already taken regarding PSI (such as participation in the Spanish exercise), but whether Turkey would send an observer to the Japanese exercise would "need to be assessed in light of the US message."

16. (C) Comment: Ilicak's response is not surprising given his earlier emotional reaction to the lack of answers to his questions about the core group (ref c). We will follow up with MG Arslan, but based on his past comments to us, we expect he will be as angry as Ilicak. Both feel personally invested in Turkey's PSI participation and are bitter that Turkey appears locked out of what they view as PSI's steering committee, the core group. For now, we have bought some time. We will urge the Turks to send an observer to the Japanese exercise, but we doubt that Ankara will decide on the kind of exercise (experts or regional) it will host in 2006 (or whether it will host any PSI activity at all) until after the GOT reconsiders its future in PSI. End Comment.  
EDELMAN